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NEW SOUTH WALES

NEWS RELEASE

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Batemans Marine Park Zoning Plan out today

State Plan Priority E4: Better outcomes for native vegetation, biodiversity, land, rivers and coastal waterways

The Batemans Marine Park zone plan released today will remove trawling from the park, provide better access to fishing havens for recreational fishers and improve overall conservation of the south coast's marine environment.

Releasing the plan, Environment Minister Bob Debus, said the new zones would come into effect in **June 2007**, giving summer tourists time to adjust to any changes.

"We have worked extremely hard to deliver a balanced outcome that addresses the needs and feedback from fishing, environmental and other stakeholders," Mr Debus said.

"The Marine Parks Authority (MPA) held more than 90 meetings in towns such as Batemans Bay, Narooma, Bermagui, Ulladulla and Moruya to get the best possible local feedback about zone boundaries inside the new reserve.

"These submissions, plus the meetings, led to many changes compared to the original draft document – changes that deliver strong conservation outcomes while still ensuring locals and tourists can enjoy their favourite activities."

Mr Debus said that under the final zoning plan:

- All commercial trawling will be removed from the park reducing competition for recreational fishers and protecting breeding communities and nursing grounds to repopulate depleted areas
- Commercial netting will be removed from the Clyde River (Batemans Bay) and Durras Lake at the request of local conservation and recreational fishing groups
- Recreational fishing will be allowed in 80% of the park, including fishing havens such as Tomaga River, Tuross Lake, Lake Brunderee, Muammaga Lake and Little Lake and most of the waters off Montague Island.
- Sanctuary zones will cover about 19 per cent of the park, habitat protection zones 43 per cent and general use zones 37 per cent
- Important sanctuary zones at Brush Island, Murramarrang Coast, Burrewarra Point and Mullimburra Point will be retained

"Like every other marine park in NSW, swimming, diving and commercial activities such as estuarine netting will continue in the Batemans Marine Park," Mr Debus said.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Mr Ian Macdonald said the Government had made major concessions for recreational fishers during the extensive consultation process.

"Removing commercial fish trawling and dredging for shellfish is a major change from the draft zoning plan and a big win for the recreational fishing industry," Mr Macdonald said.

"To remove trawling from the park the Government has provided an extra $2.2 million to buy out up to 14 commercial trawling licences, which will help to reduce commercial fishing pressure in areas next to the park.

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“The total buy back package for commercial licences in the reserve is now $10.7 million and will be rolled out beginning in March. “

“It is important to note that these changes come into affect in six months from now, and there will be no restrictions whatsoever on fishing in the area this summer. The plan itself will be reviewed in 5 years.”

The NSW Government has committed $150,000 to Eurobodalla Shire Council for use on a marketing and education campaign for the Batemans Marine Park.

Mr Debus recently met with representatives from Eurobodalla Shire Council, including Mayor Neil Mumme.

“This commitment by the Iemma Government has been made after strong and constructive representation from council,” Cr Mumme said.

“Council are rightly concerned about the affect a marine park misinformation campaign is having on people planning holidays on the South Coast.”

The 85,000 hectare Batemans Marine Park stretches from just north of Brush Island, north of Batemans Bay, to Wallaga Lake, south of Narooma.

It includes key natural features such as: the Murramarang coast; coastal lakes such as Durras, Tuross and Wallaga; the Clyde River and Batemans Bay; Tollgate Islands and the waters around Montague Island – a South Coast icon renowned for seals, grey nurse sharks, penguins and many other seabird species.

Maps of the new zone plan will from today be on the Marine Parks Authority website www.mpa.nsw.gov.au, at the MPA office in Narooma and at local National Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Primary Industries offices.

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Batemans Marine Park Fact Sheet

Consultation process

The State Government announced a new 85,000 hectare multiple-use marine park on the NSW south coast to protect important marine habitats, bolster fish stocks and boost tourism in the area in November 2005. It was formally gazetted by the NSW Government earlier this year.

The Marine Parks Authority have held more than 90 meetings in towns such as Batemans Bay, Narooma, Bermagui, Ulladulla and Moruya to get the best possible local feedback about zone boundaries inside the new reserve.

The draft zoning plan was placed on public exhibition on 14 July 2006 with the submission period closing on 15 October 2006.

The MPA received around 1400 submissions from individuals and groups including, recreational fishers, scuba divers, charter vessels, commercial fishermen, business people, conservationists and the general public, and another 3500 form letters from recreational fishing groups.

Beneficial changes between the draft and final zoning plans for Batemans Marine Park

Commercial fish trawling and dredging for shellfish has been excluded from the entire marine park. This is a major change from the draft Zoning plan and a big win for recreational fishers.

Recreational fishing will be improved in the marine park through the commercial exclusion as breeding communities will be protected and depleted nursing grounds given a chance to repopulate.

Commercial net fishing has been excluded in all of the Clyde River and all of Durras Lake. The Clyde is a major recreational fishing resource and very important to the tourist economy of Batemans Bay.

Compared to the draft, the final plan also:

- Removes a number of small sanctuary zones (Belowla Is, Bengello Beach, and South Broulee)
- Removes areas of sanctuary zones in Wallaga Lake and reconfigures sanctuary zones in Wagonga Inlet. These changes improve fishing access to the upper reaches of these two estuaries.
- Improves access to sheltered fishing locations in the lee of headlands, most notably on the northern side of Batemans Bay and the south side of Burrewarra Point
- Removes the Flat Rock sanctuary zone but includes some compensatory changes to the sanctuary zone around the Tollgate Islands and around North Head.

The zoning of all coastal and estuarine locations near coastal population centres, caravan parks, boat ramps and other focal points has been arranged to maximise access for recreational activities while protecting important communities of animals and plants.

Zoning

The Batemans Marine Park is divided into four different zone types, based on the level of environmental protection required. They are:

- **sanctuary zones (19 per cent)** , “no take zones” provide the highest level of protection where the removal or harm of any plants or animals, including recreational fishing is not allowed People can still swim, dive, sail and snorkel in sanctuary zones.
- **habitat protection zones (43 per cent)**, which also offer a high level of protection. Recreational fishing and some commercial fishing is allowed.
- **general use zones (37 per cent)**, which allow most recreational and commercial activities, provided they are ecologically sustainable.

- **Special purpose zone (0.4 per cent)** provide for activities like aquaculture, marinas and research opportunities within the marine park.

General Facts

Recreational fishing will still be allowed in 80 per cent of the Batemans Marine Park.

The NSW Coastline is approximately 2137 kilometres long and now almost 622 kms of coastal shoreline is incorporated within marine parks. In total approximately 34 per cent of the state's waters (out to three miles are incorporated into multiple use marine parks).

Benefits of marine parks

A report titled '*A Review of Benefits of Marine Protected Areas and Related Zoning Considerations'*, prepared on behalf of the Marine Parks Authority Research Committee identified a range of advantages and scientific research justifying marine parks.

The report lists benefits cited in scientific studies that may result from the implementation of marine protected areas such as increases in the abundance, biomass, diversity and productivity of many species. A copy of the full report is available at: http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/research.html

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